

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE P.R.XIX PM651/7758M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER X001-3441

- 2 Jun 43 Ordered as a Spitfire LF. Mk. VIII by the Ministry of Aircraft Production to contract AIR/1877/c23 (c).
- 45 Built as a PR.XIX by Vickers at Eastleigh. Serial batch PM651-661. Constructor's number 6S.687107.
- 27 Nov 45 Awaiting collection.
- 27 Nov 45 Controller of Research and Development, White Waltham, Berks.
- 31 Jul 47 To M.L. Aviation at White Waltham (Civilian repair Depot).
- 30 Sep 47 To store at No.6 Maintenance Unit, RAF Brize Norton.
- 15 Jan 51 To Airwork General Trading at Gatwick Airport for refurbishment and modifications.
- 23 May 51 Repairs complete - awaiting collection.
- 25 May 51 Returned to No.6 MU at RAF Brize Norton for further storage.
- 15 Mar 54 To the Short Bros. and Harland operated Meteorological Research Flight Temperature and Humidity (THUM) Flight at RAF Woodvale, near Southport, probably as a replacement for PM628 which had been lost in a fatal forced landing near Church Pulverbach, Salop on 4 March 1954. These daily THUM flights involved taking readings at altitudes up to 30,000 feet and reporting on clouds, ice formation, contrails, turbulence, haze, visibility and prevailing weather conditions, with the readings being passed to the Meteorological Office.

On one occasion whilst being flown by the THUM Flight leader, John Formby, the pilot noticed signs of over-speeding of the propeller and low oil pressure whilst at less than 1000feet. The

symptoms worsened and he made an emergency landing at the disused airfield at Calveley, Cheshire.
Here it was found that his oil dilution button had been jammed with a grain of sand with the result that petrol was being pumped into the oil supply.

- 14 April 54 Damaged (Cat. 4R) in flying accident - forced landing at Halfpenny Green airfield, Staffs.
- 15 Apr 54 Allocated to Home Command as display airframe following assessment of required repairs as uneconomic and surplus to the unit's requirements.
- 16 Jul 54 Struck off charge at RAF Woodvale.
- Jul 54 Displayed at Hucknall. Photo - Control Column Nov. 70 p.173. Silver colour scheme with red spinner.
- Aug 57 Transferred to display duties at RAF Andover, Hants.
- Sep 58 Displayed at RAF Andover Battle of Britain Day. Photo - Spitfire - A Look Back Over the Gate p.65.
- 61 At Andover, displayed within the camp near the parade ground in all silver finish with red spinner by this date. Also later displayed on the camp gate. Photos - Airfix Magazine Sep.61 p.171; Spitfire -A look Back Over the Gate p.65.
- 28 Aug 62 To RAF Benson, Oxon. for display and repainted in PR blue. Allocated maintenance serial 7758M. Replaced at RAF Andover by Spitfire LF. Mk. XVIe RW388.
- Sep 67 Loaned to Spitfire Productions. Ltd. and moved to RAF Henlow, Beds for use in the 'Battle of Britain' film by this date. Stripped for spare parts for other Spitfires, particularly F.24 PK724, intended to be flown in the film and now at Hendon; other parts may have gone to BBMF aircraft. By this time the main fuel tank and parts from various systems were missing from PM651.
- 15 May 68 To RAF Duxford, Cambs. painted in camouflage, without propeller or wing tips and used for airfield dressing with the temporary identities N3329 AI - S, N3317, N3320 DO - N. The wing tips were temporarily fitted to a Mk. IX Spitfire but later replaced.

Aug 68	Used in hangar shots at Duxford as N3329 BO - S.
12 Sep 68	At RAF Henlow being restored and repainted.
Oct 68	To store at RAF Henlow - movement by No.71 MU.
69	Allocated to Exhibition Flight of No.71 MU at RAF Bicester for refurbishment in PRU Blue colour scheme. Photo at Bicester following restoration - Spitfire - A look Back Over The Gate p.66.
23 Feb 70	Collected from RAF Henlow by No.71 MU and delivered to Bicester the following day. Photo at Bicester - Control Column Jul 70 p.100.
	To RAF Exhibition Flight, part of No. 71 MU, at RAF Abingdon for use as a travelling exhibit.
73	On display at the main entrance of RAF Benson, Oxon latterly coded 'X', following replacement with the Exhibition Flight by a Spitfire XVI. Photos - Spitfire - A Look Back Over The Gate p.66; Spitfire Survivors p.41; RAF Gate Guards p.85 (colour); Flypast Oct 89 p.62; Spitfire - The History p.462; Control Column May 73 p.72; Flypast July 2007 p.54 (colour). Various parts, including reportedly the wings, swapped by the BBMF.
Nov 89	To RAF St.Athan, replaced at Benson by a plastic replica Spitfire.
14 Nov 89	RAFM Hendon for display; assembled the following day, minus the rudder. Photo, Dec 89; Wrecks and Relics 12 th Edition. By this date the airframe had been heavily stripped for spares by the BBMF and others, especially parts from the engine, cockpit, fuel tanks and undercarriage bays.
Oct 91	Returned to RAF St.Athan for storage.
Mar 95	To RAFM Reserve Collection and Storage Centre at RAF Cardington, Beds for storage pending use as exchange airframe. Photo - Flypast February 2000 p.7.
3 Aug 98	Transferred by MoD to RAFM charge, still as an exchange airframe.

- 28 Jan 2000 By road to RAF Wyton, Cambs, for temporary storage due to impending closure of RAF Cardington. Photo at Wyton; Flypast January 2001 p.27.
- 6 Nov 01 By road to new RAFM storage facility at RAF Stafford due to impending closure of RAFM facility at Wyton. Photo at Stafford – Aeroplane June 2006 p.35.
- 2 Nov 2010 Fuselage to RAFM Cosford MBCC for refurbishment, with the wings following on 17 February 2011. Work included construction of a new elevator assembly and extensive work on the Griffon engine.
- Oct 2011 Restored aircraft placed on public display at RAFM Cosford.

ANDREW SIMPSON

© ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2011.